

**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**St. John the Baptist Schools
300 East 11800 South
Draper, Utah 84020**

October 23-24, 2003



Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

**THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**St. John the Baptist Schools
300 East 11800 South
Draper, UT 84020**

October 23-24, 2003

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

**Steven O. Laing, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

**DIVISION OF
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS**

Patti Harrington, Associate Superintendent

**Vicky Dahn, Director
Curriculum and Instruction**

**Georgia Loutensock, Accreditation Specialist
Curriculum and Instruction**

Salt Lake City, Utah

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword.....	ii
Utah State Board of Education	iii
St. John the Baptist Catholic Schools Board of Education and District Administration.....	1
St. John the Baptist Catholic Schools Administration and Staff	2
St. John the Baptist Catholic Schools School Mission Statement and Belief Statements ...	7
Members of the Visiting Team	9
Visiting Team Report.....	10
Chapter 1: School Profile.....	10
Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry.....	10
Chapter 2: The Self-Study Process	11
Chapter 3: Instructional and Organizational Effectiveness	12
Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals	15
Curriculum Development.....	16
Quality Instructional Design	17
Quality Assessment Systems	18
Leadership for School Improvement	19
Community Building	20
Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning.....	21
Chapter 4: Northwest Association of Schools and of Colleges and Universities (NASCU)	
Standards I-XI.....	21
Chapter 5: School Improvement Efforts – Action Plan	23
Chapter 6: Major Commendations and Recommendations of the Visiting Team	24

FOREWORD

A major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate inservice growth and school improvement. Consequently, requirements include not only meeting the standards of the Utah State Office of Education, but also completing a school evaluation every six years.

School evaluation is that effort by the local school staff to take a comprehensive look at the school's program, operation, and effect. The school determines how closely its purposes and philosophy coincide with its actual practices and the degree to which its stated objectives are being reached. It is a three-phased program: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, October 23 and 24, 2003, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to meet the requirements referred to above.

The entire staff of St. John the Baptist Schools is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principals McKinnie and Ward is commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for the generally fine program being provided for St. John the Baptist Schools' students, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more adequately meet the needs of the students of St. John the Baptist Schools.

Steven O. Laing, Ed.D.
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

District 1

Teresa L. Theurer
66 Canterbury Circle
Logan, UT 84321
Phone: (435) 753-0740

District 6

Tim Beagley
3084 South 3550 West
West Valley City, UT 84119
Phone: (801) 969-6454

District 11

David L. Moss
1964 Hawk Circle
Sandy, UT 84092
Phone: (801) 572-6144

District 2

Greg W. Haws
5841 West 4600 South
Hooper, UT 84315
Phone: (801) 985-7980

District 7

John C. Pingree
1389 Harvard Avenue
Salt Lake City, UT 84105
Phone: (801) 582-5635

District 12

Mike Anderson
455 East 200 North
Lindon, UT 84042
Phone: (801) 785-1212

District 3

Edward Dalton
1323 Bryan Road
Erda, UT 84074
Phone: (435) 882-4498

District 8

Janet A. Cannon
5256 Holladay Blvd.
Salt Lake City, UT 84117
Phone: (801) 272-3516

District 13

Linnea S. Barney
1965 South Main Street
Orem, UT 84058
Phone: (801) 225-4149

District 4

Joyce W. Richards
930 East 5000 South
Ogden, UT 84403
Phone: (801) 479-5370

District 9

Denis R. Morrill
6024 South 2200 West
Taylorsville, UT 84118
Phone: (801) 969-2334

District 14

Dixie Allen
1065 South 500 West
Vernal, UT 84078
Phone: (435) 789-0534

District 5

Kim R. Burningham
932 Canyon Crest Drive
Bountiful, UT 84010
Phone: (801) 292-9261

District 10

Laurel Brown
5311 South Lucky Clover Ln
Murray, UT 84123
Phone: (801) 261-4221

District 15

Debra G. Roberts
Box 1780
Beaver, UT 84713
Phone: (435) 438-5843

Jed H. Pitcher*

Regence Blue Cross Blue Shield of Utah
PO Box 30270
Salt Lake City, UT 84108
Phone: (801) 298-8063

Sara V. Sinclair*

1340 North 1500 East
Logan, UT 84341-2851
Phone: (435) 754-0216

Steven O. Laing
Executive Officer

Twila B. Affleck
Secretary

**ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
DIOCESE OF SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH**

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Kelly Sullivan	President
Marc Rasich	Vice President
Steve Bojack	Member
Sonya Davis	Member
AnnMarie Edwards	Member
Ronald Heinz	Member
Christine Huley	Member
Patrick Kelliher	Member
Michelle Tack	Member
Sister Catherine Kamphaus	Ex officio Member
Sister Karla McKinnie	Ex officio Member
Nikki Ward	Ex officio Member
Beth Landcaster	Ex officio Member
Dave Simpson	Ex officio Member
Maria Carrizo	Ex officio Member
Melaine Eyler	Ex officio Member

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Sister Catherine Kamphaus	Superintendent
Sister Genevra Rolf	Assistant Superintendent
James Duane	Director Applied Technology Education
Dave Simpson	Business Manager
Elmer Downs	Director Buildings and Grounds
John Moran	Supervisor Transportation and Maintenance
Jan Selmer	Supervisor School Lunch

**ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
DIOCESE OF SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH**

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Sister Karla McKinnieElementary Principal
Donna KocurElementary Assistant Principal
Nikki Ward..... Middle School Principal
James Markosian.....Middle School Assistant Principal
Maria CarrizoDay Care Director

Counseling

Susan McNulty.....Elementary Counselor
Jane Miller Middle School Counselor

Support Staff

Development	Beth Landcaster	Aides (continued)
Secretary	Linda Holmes	Colleen Grogg
Tuition/P.S.	Ruth Fitzpatrick	Maureen Hatch
Receptionist	Kathy Miller	Kim Holyfield
Office Aide	Katie Sloggett	Cindy Leonard
Nurse	Mary Jo Duing	Trish Marks
Nurse	Margaret Spencer	Celina Morris
Aides	Julie Baldassari	Virginia Orozco
	Nola Becker	Darci Peterson
	Chris Benda	Sally Richards
	Rebecca Camara	Christine Tinnes
	Felicia Frakes	Teri Young

Support Staff Guardian Angel Day Care/Extended Day Program

Susan Buchanan	Monica Herricks	Trish Marks
Celida de Botellio	Katrina Joseph	Maria Mazzini
Staci Dumesnil	Heidi Leek	Novella Mutz
Julie Hanten	Eva Malouf	Jamie Nannini

Julie Pizza
Colleen Salazar

Adele Stephens
Julie Talbott

Vicky Venemon
Mary Wee

Faculty

Pre-K Stacey Lueke
Darci Peterson
Trish Marks

Kindergarten Nancy Williams

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Faculty

Kindergarten
Kim Huser
Patricia Lee

Pamela Legault
Chris Evans

Grade 1
Sue Partridge
Kerry Russ
Ani Sauter

Grade 5
Sue Safran
Toni Houston
Lisa Wiederholt

Grade 2
Sandy Chapman
Natalie McKeirnan
Maria Moynihan

Art Kathryn Czarnecki
Computer
Ginny Gale
Kathleen Keller

Grade 3
Beth Harrell
Charlene Swagler
Rebecca Boland

Dance Mary Northway
Library Andrea Becker
Music Amy Pernich
Band Scott Larrabee

Grade 4
Sister Celine Dounies, CSC

P.E. Teresa Thomas
Spanish Patricia Brenneisen

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST MIDDLE SCHOOL

Support Staff

Susan Kersey	Secretary	Katie Sloggett	Purchasing
Vita Fulton	Office Aide	Leresa Lynch	Para Professional

Faculty

Angela Algarin	Language Arts	John Huffman	Math
Laura Bradford		Patrick Jefferies	
	Social Studies, Language Arts		Social Studies/Religion
Jeff Bolle		Cheryl Krcelic	Computer
	Social Studies, Language Arts	Julie Krueger	Science Math
Jen Brown	Spanish/French	Scott Larrabee	Music
Patti Buelte	Learning Center	Sara Leonard	Language Arts
Robin Bugg	P.E.	Mary Northway	Dance
Lisa Dimond		Robert Parker	Math
	Religion, Language Arts	Pasha Pasalic	Art
Peri Flanagan	Religion	Jean Synowicki	Math
Patti Garrison	TV Production	Charlie Tisdale	Religion
Emmy Hartney	Science, Math		

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST SCHOOLS

MISSION STATEMENT

St. John the Baptist Catholic Schools are dedicated to the development of the whole child according to the dictates of the Gospel and the Catholic Church. We are commissioned by the Church and delegated by parents to teach the children entrusted to our care. We provide a well-rounded program by addressing the spiritual, academic, social, psychological, aesthetic and physical development of each child.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- St. John the Baptist Catholic Schools believe our fundamental responsibility is to enhance the human person who possesses uniqueness and dignity that comes from God.
- St. John the Baptist Catholic Schools believe that students are educated in a loving and caring environment that allows them to achieve success.
- St. John the Baptist Catholic Schools believe that it is important to teach children about their responsibility to contribute to one another, to their families and to the global community.
- St. John the Baptist Catholic Schools believe that partnership with the larger community (parents, neighbors, businesses) enriches the development of the Gospel values in the students.
- St. John the Baptist Catholic Schools believe that parents are the primary educators of the students and the school serves in partnership with those parents.
- St. John the Baptist Catholic Schools believe that learning is a life-long process. Students should be guided to be responsible for, and accountable for, their own behavior and learning.
- St. John the Baptist Catholic Schools believe learning is a life-long process. Students should be guided to be responsible for, and accountable for, their own behavior and learning.
- St. John the Baptist Catholic Schools believe that we impart a solid educational foundation and Catholic formation with Christ at the center of all we do.
- St. John the Baptist Catholic Schools believe that the faculty and staff model the ways and teachings of Jesus Christ.
- St. John the Baptist Catholic Schools believe that all children are capable of learning, and that students are educated in a loving and caring environment that allows them to achieve success.
- St. John the Baptist Catholic Schools believe commitment of our staff to their faith, their educational skills and their willingness to grow professionally greatly enhances the educational community.
- St. John the Baptist Catholic Schools believe in providing a variety of strategies for learning and assessment in order to address the individual needs of the students.

- St. John the Baptist Catholic Schools believe in an education that values high expectations, academic rigor and discipline to promote a strong work ethic.
- St. John the Baptist Catholic Schools believe in teaching and modeling Christ-like values.

PHILOSOPHY

St. John the Baptist Catholic Schools provide a loving environment in which we nurture the students to develop a strong positive self-image and realize the dignity and worth of themselves and others. The Gospel message of prayer, worship and service is the model by which we seek to form our students in responsible decision making and leadership.

Our children are the future and they are each unique children of God. We strive to instill in our students the initiative to reach their potential, the love of learning, the desire to serve others and a respect for all people and creation. Our students will then be able to accept the challenge and responsibility of living in a diverse and global community.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Renee Genereux, Judge Memorial Catholic High School,
Visiting Team Chairperson

Jeanette Cox, South Summit Middle School, South Summit School District

Rosanne Markham, Evergreen Junior High School, Granite School District

Shirley Redle, Kearns-St. Ann School, Catholic Schools

Barbara Springer, Oquirrh Hills Middle School, Jordan School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST SCHOOLS

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

St. John the Baptist Catholic Schools are part of the Skaggs Catholic Center, a 57-acre complex of elementary and secondary private Catholic schools located in Draper, Utah. The school was originally built from a significant gift from the Sam and Aline Skaggs family. Now that the school is operational, it is funded entirely through tuition, grants, and private donations. When the school opened in 1999, the schools housed an elementary school, consisting of kindergarten through eighth grades, along with Juan Diego High School, which housed grades nine through twelve. In February of 2001, the Diocese made a decision to divide the school into elementary and middle schools. The elementary presently has six sections of pre-kindergarten, and three classes of kindergarten through fifth grade. The middle school has four classes of sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. There are 636 elementary and 344 middle school students enrolled for the 2003-2004 school year.

a) *What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of their profile?*

Seventy-two percent of St. John's student body comes from upper-middle-income or affluent families. However, the school is continually engaging in outreach to include a more diverse population. Forty percent of the student body is on some form of financial aid. Enrollment has increased each year (from 805 in 1999 to 980 in 2003), and this trend is expected to continue. SAT data is given for the four years since the school's inception, and it clearly shows progress in most areas.

b) *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

There is no disaggregated data within the profile. It would benefit the school and community to be able to see how St. John's scores align with other Catholic schools within the diocese as well as public schools in the area. Attention should also be given to discovering who is learning and who is not learning within the school.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Other forms of assessment that are being done, or that could be implemented, at the school could be included in the profile as further documentation of who is

learning and what is being learned. These could include STAR/AR goals and testing, portfolio assessments, and end-of-year or criterion-referenced tests.

- Parent involvement records, in the form of volunteer hours and projects worked on, would give the Visiting Team a clearer picture of community involvement.
- Information on business partners or other community participation could be included. For example, there is no mention in the report of the outstanding partnership with The Piano Gallery, which not only donated eight electronic Roland pianos to the elementary music program, but also provided 35 scholarships to families. These provided electronic pianos in their homes for students to use for private piano lessons.
- Disaggregated data is vital to understanding which students are learning and what they are learning. By looking at data in different ways, a clearer focus often becomes evident.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

- a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

St. John the Baptist Schools began their self-study in fall of 2002 using the National Catholic Education Association protocol *Validating the Vision*. Foundation Documents: Mission Statement, Belief Statements, Philosophy, Goals, Graduate Profile (Desired Results for Student Learning) were developed with input from all faculty and staff through a process of many meetings during the first years of the schools' development. A steering committee comprised of the principal and faculty members began the process of the self-study, and committees for each area of the State of the School (School Profile) were established. Faculty members signed up for committees, which were each chaired by a faculty member. Parents and other Skaggs Catholic Center personnel were included on Governance, Finance, and School and Community Relations committees. Surveys were designed and sent to representative teachers, parents, and students for each area of the State of the School.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

The self-study reflected an analysis of the school's effectiveness based on the *Validating the Vision* assessment protocol. Surveys relating to each area of the State of the School were widely distributed and analyzed to suggest strengths and issues to be explored. The Visiting Team's observations and interviews

throughout the visit led to the conclusion that the self-study does not in itself present an accurate picture of the schools' strengths, particularly in the areas of school leadership and curriculum and instruction.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

St. John the Baptist Schools' desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are expressed through their goals and objectives and graduate profile as follows:

Goals and Objectives:

1. Religious:
 - All students are special creations of God and can recognize and appreciate their uniqueness.
 - Prayer, worship and service are a part of the Gospel-directed curriculum.
 - Our program develops moral and spiritual values, instills ethical standards of conduct and teaches a basic understanding of the doctrine of the Catholic Church.
2. Intellectual:
 - Students are provided education in basic skills, especially in communication-related subjects, quantitative thinking and the sciences.
 - We seek to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills, independent reasoning and personal responsibility for intellectual development.
 - All students are held to high, positive expectations based on their individual talents.
3. Social:
 - We strive to develop a sense of belonging in the school, parish and world community.
 - Understanding our place in the community, we develop a sense of responsibility for the community in which we live and for the world community.
4. Psychological:
 - Students will be provided opportunities to discuss conflicts and resolve problems as they arise.
 - In times of individual crises, the school will work with parents for the benefit of the child.

5. Aesthetics:
 - The campus is rich with aesthetic focal points. There are flower gardens, religious statues and a new, clean building in which the students learn.
 - Experiences in art, music and drama develop a sense of wonder and an appreciation for beauty and arts.
6. Physical:
 - Physical education and after school sports provide opportunity to develop physically.
 - Teamwork and sharing will be instilled in our sports programs. The physical plant provides opportunity to have numerous programs for physical fitness.

GRADUATE PROFILE

1. Religious/Faith Dimension
 - Actively and consistently participate in their Catholic faith
 - Continue to develop a personal relationship with God through prayer, both private and liturgical
 - Develop a life-long relationship with God with Jesus as a role model
 - Know their faith, act on their faith, live their faith
 - Demonstrate knowledge of beliefs, traditions and prayers of the Catholic Church and continue to grow in faith
 - Be a faith filled person who is Christ-like and prayerful
2. Christian Values Applied
 - Apply Christian values when making moral, social, or political decisions.
 - Use Catholic Christian values when making choices
 - Value the dignity of human life and make responsible moral decisions regarding self and others
 - Demonstrate an understanding of Catholic social justice teaching
3. Relationships
 - Form meaningful, healthy relationships with others
 - Form healthy relationships
 - Understand and practice the elements of a healthy lifestyle
 - Work effectively with others
 - Be a well-rounded person who is self-confident, self-disciplined and compassionate
 - Be a loving person who is a friend, a communicator, a community builder
 - Be a healthy person who is respectful of the body, practices good health habits and is a good sport
 - Demonstrate the importance of taking responsibility for one's actions

4. Respect and Dignity
 - Exhibit self-confidence and recognize that they and all people are worthy of dignity and respect
 - Have dignity for self and for others
 - Treat others with dignity and respect
 - Exhibit characteristics of integrity, honesty, compassion, sensitivity and inclusion of others
 - Appreciate diversity
 - Be respectful, resourceful and responsible
 - Work cooperatively with others, as well as independently
 - Respect self, others and the environment
 - Have a respect for their body and mind with a desire for a healthy lifestyle
5. Academic Skills
 - Develop and demonstrate competency in basic learning fundamentals
 - Possess successful study habits
 - Be prepared academically for a successful high school career and continued learning throughout their lives
 - Exhibit proficiency in curriculum standards and a desire to exceed those expectations
 - Fulfill curricular requirements of the State of Utah and the Diocese of Salt Lake City
 - Use the fundamental skills of reading, English and mathematics and be able to apply those skills in other subject areas
 - Further develop technological literacy
 - Communicate effectively both orally and in written form
6. Leadership
 - Assume leadership roles when opportunities arise
 - Be a leader in a positive way
 - Be a Christian leader who is committed to Justice, respectful and virtuous
7. Service
 - Use gifts and talents to provide service to the school, parish and community
 - Recognize the need and be of service to family, school, church, community and world
 - Develop a social conscience and a sense of justice
 - Demonstrate the ability to use time, talent and treasure to assist others
8. Lifelong Learner
 - Think logically, critically and creatively
 - Be a problem solver
 - Enjoy and value education as a lifelong learner

- Display a variety of thinking skills and communicate and work effectively with others
- Be a decision maker, a critical thinker

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

St. John the Baptist Schools included all faculty and staff in the development of their Foundation Documents. Committees were formed, and everyone had an opportunity for input into the documents. Revisions were made until the final document was agreed upon. The faculty and staff are to be highly commended for their work in this area.

The administration, faculty, parents, school board and staff may want to consider refining and making the Mission and Belief Documents more concise.

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

The Visiting Team observed that the goals and vision stated in the Foundation Documents permeate the schools. They truly are the foundation for the schools' existence. It was observed that students are treated with respect and as individuals. The students are held to high expectations regarding achievement and social responsibility. Classrooms reflect what is currently being studied, and there is a variety of student work on display.

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

The desired results for student learning are reflected in the schools' mission, belief, goal, and graduate profile statements. The education of the whole child is central to the mission statement, and this is evident in the desired results for student learning (goals and Graduate Profile). The goals and Graduate Profile are broken down into different sections outlining all aspects of holistic living.

However, the Visiting Team considered the goals and Graduate Profile to be quite lengthy and thus difficult to internalize for students and faculty. This may prevent the achievement of these goals.

Curriculum Development:

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

At St. John the Baptist Catholic Schools, the curriculum is designed by a collaborative group of educators from the diocesan level. They align their standards with the Utah Core Curriculum and include additional curricula focused on Christian values and Catholic education. Using the diocesan core curriculum, teachers at St. John the Baptist Schools creatively develop their curricula to best meet the learning needs of the students.

St. John's has an early-out day in the schedule each week. This provides teachers with a time to meet together as a staff or academic team, to coordinate and plan. In addition, the middle school principal examines teacher lesson plans and personal reflections of her staff on a regular basis.

Although the curriculum is aligned with the Utah State Core, there is no evidence that standards have been examined for the different grade levels.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

Although it is evident that steps are being made to include DRSLs (in the Graduate Profile) as part of the curriculum, there has been no explicit effort to weave the DRSLs into the daily curriculum.

The curriculum shows strong emphasis on the importance of Christian values, relationships, respect and dignity, academics, leadership, and service, and students freely pointed out how these things are taught and modeled in their classrooms. A caring environment with teachers and counselors, along with many activities, was noted as an important aspect of the climate of the school. In these ways, the DRSLs are implicitly taught throughout the curriculum.

Significant changes have been made at the middle school level since the writing of their accreditation report. Courses have been departmentalized, students have been given elective choices, and the emphasis is becoming much more consistent with middle level philosophy. In addition, a focus on vertical and horizontal alignment of curricula has begun and is being actively pursued.

Quality Instructional Design:

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

Monthly lateral teaming among staff members allows teachers to develop, share, and use a variety of learning experiences. Strategies and learning activities align with program goals as stated in the Graduate Profile. Students are exposed to learning experiences that engage them in scholarship, religion, school and community service, and commitment to good citizenship.

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

Administrators and teachers analyze both standardized test results (SAT) and classroom assessments to assure that students' needs and learning styles are met. The Visiting Team observed that the needs of different learners are mainly assessed informally rather than being data-driven beyond the SATs. Thus, any modifications might seem minimal were it not for the fact that parents and students have both commented that teachers immediately respond to both positive and negative performance among students. Instruction strategies include oral presentations, cooperative learning groups, independent study, and individual assistance from teachers before and after school. Modifications and accommodations are made through the Learning Center for students who need skill development. The school social worker also works with students with special emotional and social needs so that their learning is optimized. Ability grouping has been instituted in language arts and math to challenge accelerated students. Ability grouping in other disciplines will be implemented when funding becomes available.

- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

Since the academic climate at St. John the Baptist Schools is positive, the emphasis placed on student achievement of knowledge and skills is student-centered. In Junior Achievement, students are provided with opportunities to apply their learning to tasks that call for decision-making as they progress toward opening a "before and after school" store. Students are given the opportunity to take Debate as an elective to enhance high-order critical thinking. Eighth grade algebra students use the same text that is used in the 9th grade.

Vertical teaming among all three schools, and among Catholic schools of the diocesan system, allows teachers to dialogue about educational concerns and issues. This continuity provides effective transition in a variety of skills. The new Chess Club will also help develop problem solving skills for students.

The school provides opportunities for students to improve and enrich their learning through expanded uses of time, facilities, and instructional resources within the school. These opportunities are supported in the students' homes and across the community, especially through the service projects involving all students of the schools.

Quality Assessment Systems:

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or schoolwide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

The NCEA Assessment of Catholic Religious Education (ACRE) provides comparative information for St. John the Baptist Schools; the results of this assessment were not, however, provided in the self-study. This is something that needs to be addressed by the diocese and school leadership.

The SAT is given to students. While results are published, they are not attached to any comparative figures from other Catholic schools or from state or national norms.

St. John the Baptist Schools have not yet established standards for schoolwide assessments. There are no middle school standards handed down from the diocese.

Teachers use programs that have intrinsic evaluation tools developed by the companies whose programs are in place. These include: 6 + 1 Trait Writing, Accelerated Reader, and RAP.

The administration plans to have schoolwide assessments developed by the end of the 2003-04 school year or at the beginning of the 2004-05 year.

Meetings are scheduled for all middle school teachers in the diocese to articulate intended performance levels and expectations for student achievement.

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

According to the self-study, the school uses various tools in evaluating "academic program effectiveness," yet the only test scores available are SATs, with no comparative analysis to other Catholic or public schools.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

The leadership in the middle school is committed to the design and development of assessments that would more closely align with the NSSE principles of Quality Assessment Systems. This will be an ongoing process.

Leadership for School Improvement:

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

The principals and assistant principals of St. John the Baptist Schools provide excellent leadership in creating and fostering a strong academic environment. The administrators are visible and present around the school and accessible to parents, students, and staff. They give close attention to lesson planning and review, and have implemented a formal mentoring program and a clear and formal teacher supervision and evaluation process. The principals provide regular professional development opportunities on topics relevant to teacher needs (e.g., the Six Traits Writing programs). Wednesday afternoons are devoted to faculty inservice and meetings. Two of the administrators also teach, which allows them to relate to students and teachers in their role as principal teachers.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

In the self-study and in the Visiting Team's interviews with parents and teachers, it was clear that the leadership of both schools is very inclusive of school stakeholders in decision making. The Home and School Association and the School Board meet regularly with the principals to make suggestions, especially relative to activities and fundraising. The Wednesday afternoon meetings are utilized for faculty input regarding policy and curricular decisions. The middle school policy and program revisions were directly linked to the principles of middle school reform.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

The SAT standardized test scores are analyzed by the principals and teachers and serve as the basis for improvements in the curriculum. They are also shared and discussed with parents at the parent teacher conferences.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

St. John's provides students with a well-organized and disciplined school climate.

It is evident that the school operates under a clear system of management, with excellent collaboration, cooperation, and support between the two principals. Each principal has appointed a vice-principal who has skills that allow him or her to focus on areas of administration that free up the principal.

Both principals work diligently with the School Board and development office to assure that adequate funding is secured for the needs of the school. The strategic plan calls for a careful future planning process to assure that tuition assistance, learning resources, and school facilities are adequate for the needs of the students.

The Visiting Team learned in interviews with some middle school students that there are a few incidents of disrespect and mild bullying that make some students feel unsafe in the school. The school social workers' newly implemented bullying prevention program and careful supervision of school personnel should help alleviate this problem.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

The Strategic Plan calls for an allocation of resources for professional development of teachers, the development of learning resource centers, and additional classroom resources and technology and tuition scholarships, all of which are aligned with student learning goals.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

Partnership with parent groups, the parish, the high school, and the athletic and activities leaders allows for a wide breadth of shared responsibility for student learning. Parents and students feel a strong sense of belonging to the school as a family or as their primary community. Mentoring by teams encourages shared responsibility for the growth of teachers who are new to the schools.

Community Building:

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

School newsletters are sent home weekly in the elementary and middle schools. PowerPoint is used to keep the parents aware of what their child is doing in the classroom. Teachers are available by phone or e-mail. Open communication is encouraged and evident. Teachers meet regularly to discuss curricula and student needs. It was evident to the Visiting Team that everyone in the school works with

and cares about each other with Christian respect and love. During visits to the classrooms, students were very much at ease and comfortable with the teachers and each other. Bulletin boards reflected community building.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

The Visiting Team observed many parent volunteers in the school and in the classrooms. The parents expressed delight with being able to be a part of the students' learning. Parents and volunteers are involved in the I Can Read program. Parents volunteer for after-school activities such as chess, art, etc. Parents, school, and students are involved in activities outside the school.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

The St. John the Baptist Schools' faculty and leadership demonstrate a commitment to professional development. The teachers actively participate in vertical teams and diocesan inservices, which connect them to other Catholic schools in the diocese. In addition, all teachers develop professional goals and work with their principals to evaluate their teaching and curriculum. Wednesday afternoon inservices contribute to developing the knowledge and skills needed for improvement in instruction and assessment. Six middle school teachers will attend the National Middle School conference in Atlanta this year.

- b) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

The school leadership works to develop a culture of continuous improvement as they introduce their faculty to best practices in instruction and assessment. In addition, the School Board has included fundraising for professional development and technology in its five-year plan.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (NASCU) STANDARDS I-XI

Standard I – Educational Program

This standard is met.

Standard II – Student Personnel Services

This standard is met.

Standard III – School Plant and Equipment

This standard is met.

Standard IV – Library Media Program

This standard is met.

Standard V – Records

This standard is met.

Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)

This standard is met.

Standard VII – Preparation of Personnel

This standard is not met. St. John the Baptist Schools have 14 teachers who are not licensed, but each is involved in some sort of program to rectify the problem. Parents expressed concern, but understood challenges facing school leadership with regard to the situation. Many of those teachers are involved in alternative licensure programs.

Standard VIII – Administration

This standard is met.

Standard IX – Teacher Load

This standard is met.

Standard X – Activities

This standard is met.

Standard XI – Business Practices

This standard is met.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

- a) *To what extent is the schoolwide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

The Strategic Plan included the following goals:

1. Further develop an academic program that provides a well-rounded education designed to allow all students to master the fundamental skills necessary to succeed in education.
2. Foster an environment of spiritual unity based on Christian values at St. John the Baptist Catholic Schools and Parish.
3. Optimize use of existing space and develop new space as defined by enrollment, curriculum, and space needs.
4. Improve the financial well-being of St. John the Baptist Schools, and promote St. John the Baptist Catholic Schools in the community by more effectively communicating the mission and objectives of the school in order to obtain additional support, both human and financial.

Since the Strategic Plan was mainly developed by the administration and school board, the focus of many of the action plans is primarily on securing financial resources for learning resource centers, professional development, classroom resources, and future facilities. There were action plans for goal #1 that connected more clearly to student achievement: the development of additional methods for measuring performance and improving communication of test results, lateral and vertical teaming to coordinate curricula, and provision of more activities for middle school students. Goal #2 led to action plans for enhanced communication between the parish and the schools, promotion of student involvement in planning liturgical celebrations, service projects, and the development of the “Love and Logic” discipline program.

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and systemwide?*

In a meeting with members of the school board and with administration, a strong commitment to the strategic plan was expressed. Faculty and staff members seemed less familiar with the strategic plan and their involvement in its implementation.

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the schoolwide action plan appear to be?*

The Visiting Team is confident that the principals of the St. John the Baptist Schools will update the Strategic Plan to include more action plans which relate to the learning goals, the needs of students, and the recommendations made during the site visit. The leadership will motivate the faculty and school board to make progress on this plan in the next three years. In addition, the school board is committed to its five-year plan for improvement of facilities and technology for the schools.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends the leadership, staff, and parents of St. John the Baptist Schools for the high level of community spirit that permeates these schools. The untiring commitment of parents, school leadership, and teachers to their ministry as educators is outstanding. As a result of the positive school climate, students are engaged in their learning opportunities with enthusiasm, pride, and the freedom to be and express themselves. The Visiting Team experienced many instances of the respect, care, and regard all members of the St. John family have for each other: students, parents, support staff, faculty and administration.
- The Visiting Team commends the administration and staff for their leadership in developing an environment of educational excellence. It was clear from classroom observations as well as student and parent interviews that the leadership and teaching staff provide the students with a challenging curriculum and outstanding instruction. All of this has been accomplished in the short five years that the school has been in existence.
- The Visiting Team commends the schools for inculcating all programs and relationships with a strong sense of Catholic identity and teaching. The mission and beliefs of the school, particularly the emphasis on educating the whole child, are visible throughout. Student service projects are another concrete example of ways the students learn to live their Gospel values.
- The Visiting Team commends St. John the Baptist Schools for the leadership of the principals and staff in embracing middle school reform. Staff development, allocation of resources for teacher participation in the National Middle School Association conference, and the elective courses have enriched and will continue to enrich the middle school program. Numerous students and parents commented on the positive changes and choices that have been introduced in the middle school in these past few months.

- The Visiting Team commends the schools for the aesthetic quality of the school facilities and classrooms. Not only is the school plant a work of architectural beauty, the attention to cleanliness and respect for the classrooms and common areas, the works of art displayed around the school, and the pride expressed by the students and parents fulfill the schools' goal of imbuing the students with a sense of beauty and an appreciation for the arts.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that St. John the Baptist Schools revise the *Validating the Vision* document so that the Strategic Plan is more clearly aligned with the State of the School. Greater focus on action plans for school improvement that relate to goals for student learning will strengthen this school improvement plan.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the leadership and teaching staff utilize the school profile and self-study findings as a driving force in decision making.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the schools develop performance standards, which can be used as a basis for measuring student progress and as goals toward which the entire school can move.
- The Visiting Team recommends the development of a comprehensive, systematic means of measuring student achievement and progress. Although the schools utilize the SAT, it is recommended they consider implementing classroom and schoolwide Criterion-Referenced Tests or other instruments that reflect the school's curriculum and learning standards. The data collected needs to be disaggregated and analyzed to form the basis for future goals, objectives, and action plans. The consistent collection and analysis of student achievement data will validate current school improvement efforts and may also identify student needs that may not be apparent at the present time.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the middle school teachers participate in staff development efforts to augment their instructional strategies for teaching in the block. The Visiting Team observed that in some classrooms there was a lack of variety in learning activities and transitions that would optimize student achievement during the extended time.